Devil's Glen Provincial Park Management Plan

Ministry of Natural Resources

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Minister

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We are pleased to approve the Devil's Glen Provincial Park Management Plan, as official policy for the management and development of this park. The plan reflects this Ministry's intent to protect the natural features of the park and maintain and develop high quality opportunities for outdoor recreation and heritage appreciation for both residents of Ontario and visitors to the Province.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Devil's Glen Provincial Park is a small park situated on the Niagara Escarpment, south of Nottawasaga Bay, in the Township of Nottawasaga, County of Simcoe. The park is located approximately 16 km south of Collingwood, and 24 km southwest of Wasaga Beach (see Figure 1).

The park has an upland land base of 5.5 ha which includes 45 campsites and a small day-use picnic area (approximately 10 tables). Adjacent to Devil's Glen is 55 ha of Crown land (see Figure 2) consisting primarily of a steep-sided valley where the Mad River has cut through the Niagara Escarpment and left Silurian Amabel dolomite rock exposed. The park's 2.5 km hiking trail is located in this valley and is part of the Blue Mountain Section of the Bruce Trail. The Ganaraska Hiking Trail joins the Bruce Trail just to the southeast of the park.

No additional camping or picnicking facilities are proposed since the remaining park land and most of the Crown land is too steep and fragile to be suitable for further development.

The park and the Crown land possess the following natural characteristics: rock faces and outcrop features, slopes 12% or greater, bottomlands, wetlands, the Mad River (quality coldwater fishery habitat), natural vegetative cover, wildlife habitat areas, and viewing vantage points along the rim of the valley.

The park is one of 105 existing and proposed parks located in the Niagara Escarpment Parks System.

This system is based on public lands acquired to protect distinctive features and areas along the Escarpment. The system consists of lands owned and managed by several agencies. The Ministry of Natural Resources is the predominant manager of Escarpment parks in the area.

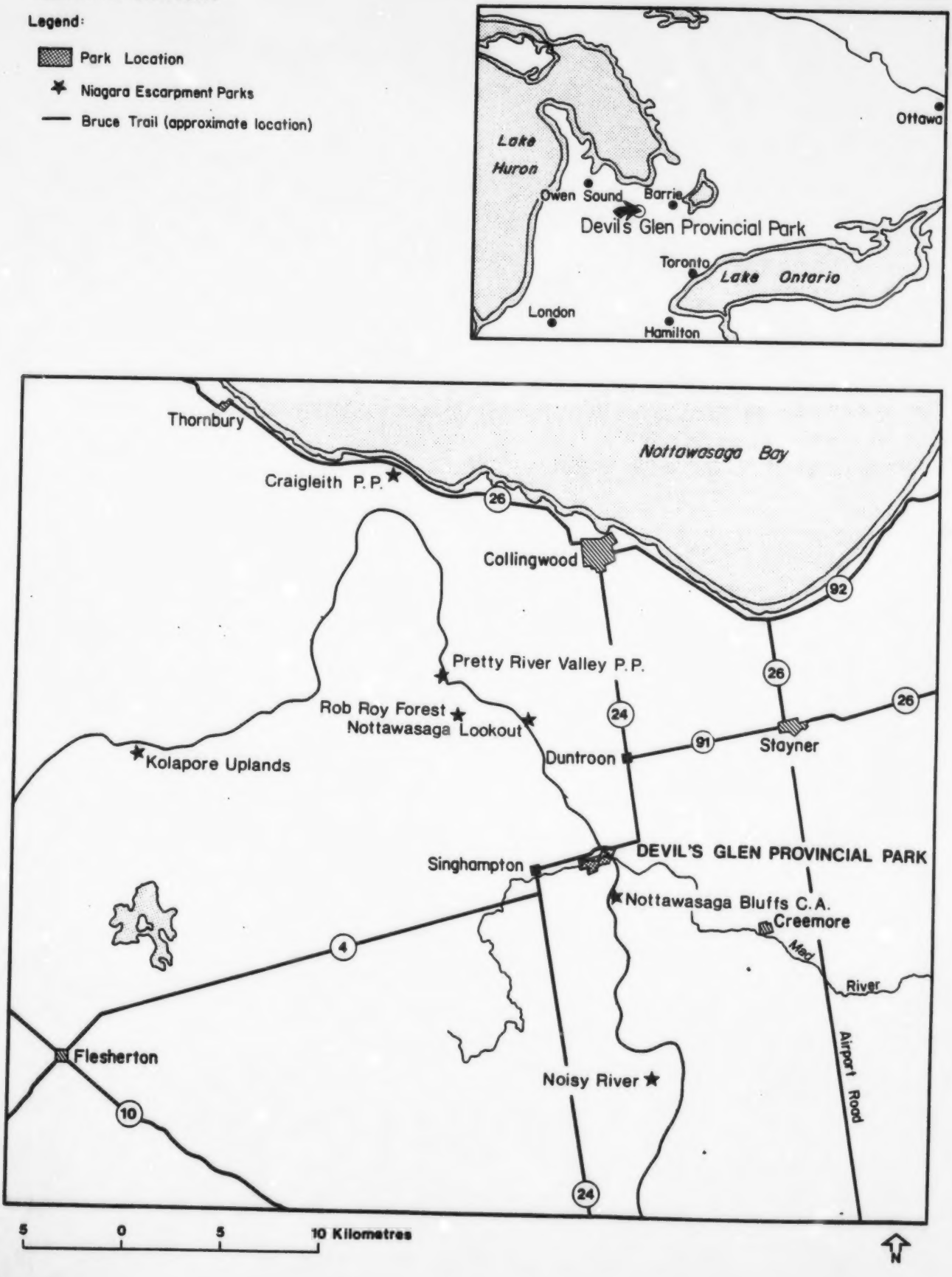
Pretty River Valley Provincial Park, 10 km to the northwest of Devil's Glen, has been designated as a nodal park with a distinctive role to play within the Niagara Escarpment Parks System. When Pretty River Valley Provincial Park is developed it will be a key staging area and interpretive centre for this segment of the Escarpment and the major starting place from which to explore other nearby parks, including Devil's Glen.

The Bruce Trail, which goes through Devil's Glen, is an essential component of the system, linking the park to other public open spaces and scenic attractions along the Escarpment's 725 kilometres.

Devil's Glen fits in with the intention of the Niagara Escarpment Parks System by providing extensive recreational experiences (hiking, etc.) with limited development for activities such as picnicking and camping. Recreational opportunities and the provision of facilities (i.e., camping) at Devil's Glen may be re-evaluated in the future as other Niagara Escarpment Parks are developed in the area.

FIGURE 1

REGIONAL CONTEXT



From 1980 to 1985, the number of daily vehicle permits issued increased approximately 4% and visitors increased by 10%. During the same period, camper nights increased 27.5%. The park averages 44% campsite occupancy during July and August.

This management plan will guide the planning, development and management of the park and the adjacent Crown land's natural and recreational resources.

2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The 55 ha of adjacent Crown land will be regulated and thus officially included within the boundary of Devil's Glen Provincial Park. Reasons for regulating the Crown land include:

- the protection of 5 known significant plant species (1 provincially rare, 3 provincially uncommon and 1 regionally uncommon);
- the protection of a regionally significant geological feature (incised river valley);
- the protection of a significant quality coldwater fishery habitat.

3. CLASSIFICATION

The park will retain its current status as a recreation class park. Consideration was given to reclassifying the park as natural environment. This change was rejected because the park is far smaller than the recommended mininum size for a natural environment park, and the park's facilities are not consistent with what park users would expect from a natural environment park.

Unlike most other public open spaces along the Niagara Escarpment, the Niagara Escarpment Plan did not recommend any particular classification. Classification was left to be determined during the management planning process.

4. GOAL

The goal of Devil's Glen Provincial Park is to provide a limited variety of outdoor recreational opportunities and to protect the park's natural and recreational environments.

5. OBJECTIVES

5.1 Protection

The protection objective of Devil's Glen Provincial Park is:

- to protect provincially rare, provincially uncommon and regionally uncommon plant species;
- to protect the regionally significant incised river valley, as well as the Niagara Escarpment;
- to protect the high quality coldwater fishery habitat for brook trout in the Mad River.

5.2 Recreation

The recreation objective of this park is to provide opportunities for camping, picnicking, hiking and fishing .

Passive recreation with increased opportunities for hiking and fishing will be the future recreation emphasis of this park. According to the Huronia District Land Use Guidelines:

- the park's 45 campsites are estimated to represent .7% of the camping opportunities in the district to the year 2000 (the park presently offers .9% of these opportunities);
- the park's 10 day-use picnic tables are estimated to represent .1% of the picnicking opportunities in the district to the year 2000 (the park presently offers .2% of these opportunities).

(N.B.) The difference in camping and picnicking percentile opportunities between present day and the year 2000, represents an estimated increase in the number of similar opportunities to be made available elsewhere and does not reflect any proposed decrease in facility-based opportunities at Devil's Glen.

5.3 Heritage Appreciation

The heritage appreciation objective of this park is to provide facilities that will enable park visitors to explore, interpret and appreciate the landscape units and the life science and earth science values of the park and the adjacent portions of the Niagara Escarpment.

5.4 Tourism

The tourism objective for this park is to provide Ontario residents and out-of-province visitors with opportunities to discover and experience the Niagara Escarpment, Bruce Trail and surrounding recreational attractions in the Blue Mountain and southern Nottawasaga Bay region.

The park, in 1979, contributed almost $284,000 to the provincial economy through park expenditures and tourist spending. It is the objective of the Ministry to maintain and possibly increase the economic contribution of this park to the local economy.

6. BOUNDARY

The park boundary will be revised by placing the adjacent Crown land into regulation. The total area of the park will be approximately 61 ha.

Because portions of the park's proposed hiking trails are sited on land owned by the Devil's Glen Country Club, a licence or easement agreement between the Ministry and the Club may be considered for all of or part of lands, north of the river, referred to as land parcels A and B (see Figure 2).

7. ZONING

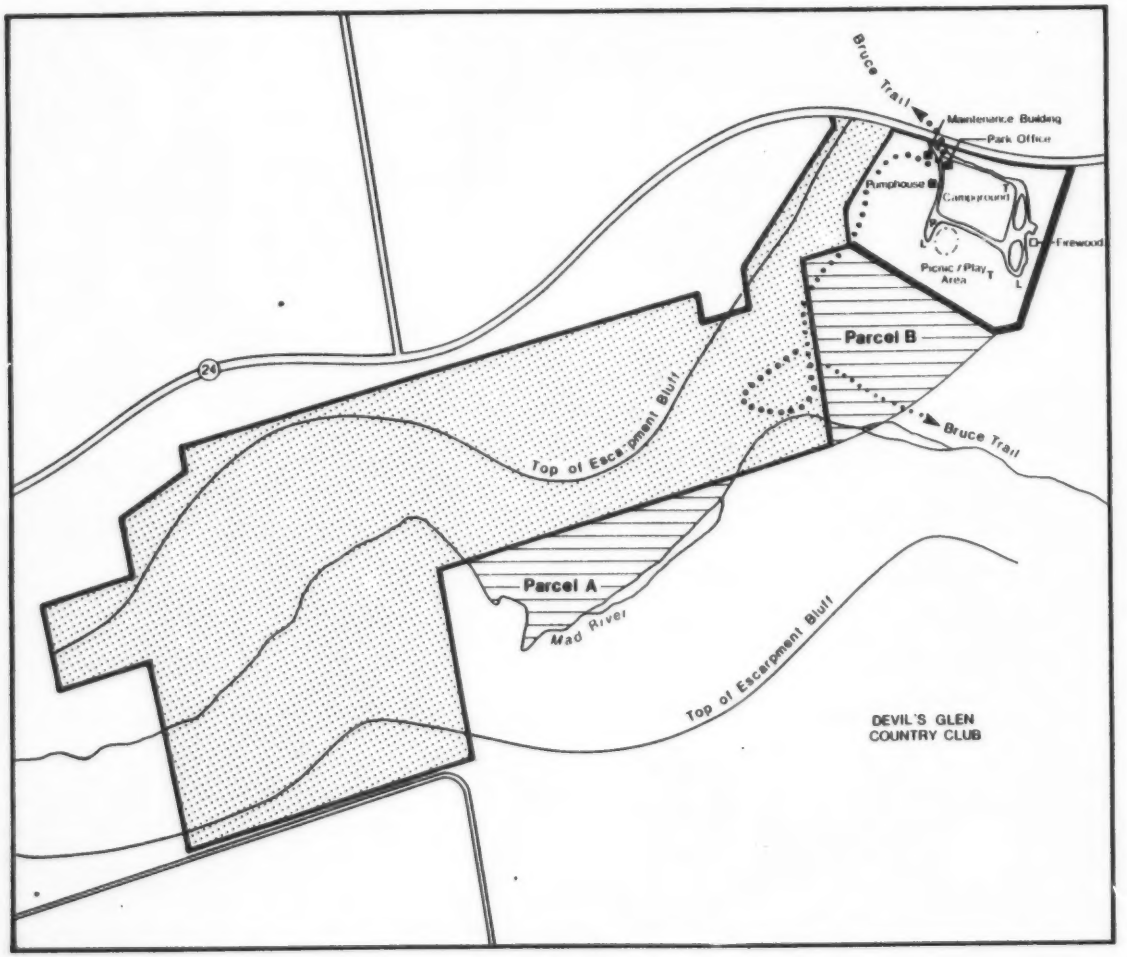
All lands within the park boundary have been zoned (see Figure 3) in recognition of their environmental qualities, required protection and their potential for recreational use within the context of the objectives of the park.

7.1 Development Zone

This zone (5 ha) is located on the tableland in the northeast corner of the park. Located here are camping, day use, maintenance and administrative facilities. The land base of this zone is fully developed so little opportunity remains for any expansion of facilities.

FIGURE 2

EXISTING DEVELOPMENT



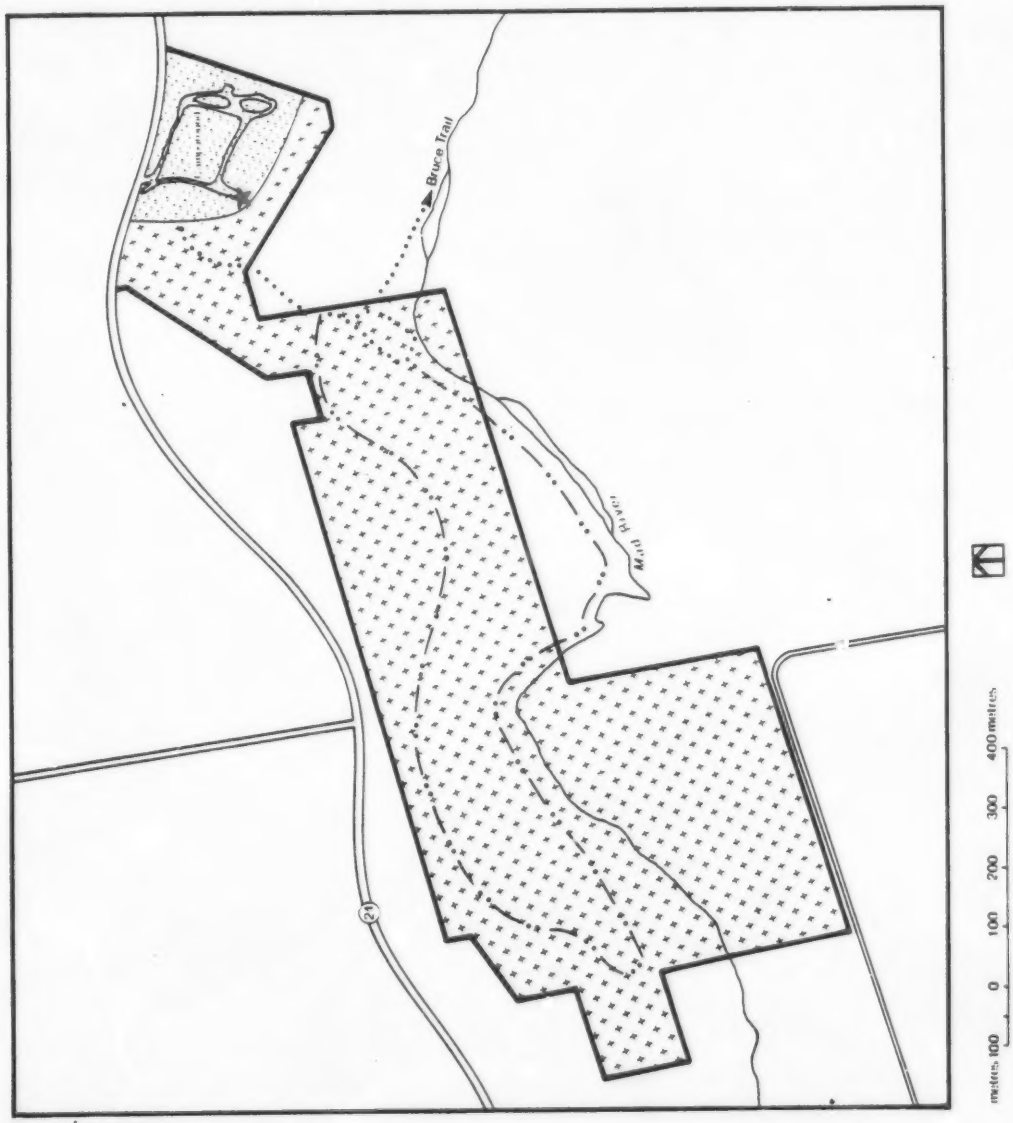
Legend

- Provincial Park Boundary
- Park Extension
- Potential Licence or Easement Agreement
- Bruce Trail
- Side Trail
- T Toilet
- L Lookout
- P Parking

metres 100 0 100 200 300 400 metres

FIGURE 3

ZONING AND PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT



Development Zone Policies

·To improve the landscape aesthetics and the environmental quality of this zone through landscape plantings.
·To maximize recreational opportunities by maintaining and improving upon existing facilities as deemed necessary.

7.2 Natural Environment Zone

This zone (56 ha) contains the Mad River Valley as well as small upland level areas.

Natural Environment Zone Policies

·To protect the significant natural features from detrimental forms and levels of recreational use.

·To encourage extensive forms of recreational use (e.g., hiking, nature appreciation, viewing, fishing) and to provide adequate facilities to accommodate such use while minimizing environmental impact.

·To monitor use to determine its impact on the environment and to take appropriate action if environmental degradation occurs.

8. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT POLICIES

8.1 Water Management

The Mad River is rated as a quality coldwater fishery habitat. Management initiatives, endorsed by the district fish and wildlife section, to maintain and improve this resource will be encouraged. The district plans to conduct a stream survey and a stream fisheries habitat assessment of the Mad River in the near future.

8.2 Vegetation Management

The vegetation communities outside the development zone will be allowed to evolve on their own with little or no management. Vegetation management in the development zone requires additional plantings and maintenance of existing plants.

Forest and vegetative insects and diseases threatening values inside or outside the park will be controlled where feasible.

9. OPERATIONS POLICIES

A Park Operations Strategy will be prepared to provide park staff with the necessary information required to operate the park on a day-to-day basis. In addition to addressing the operations policies which follow, the strategy will include such topics as budget, staffing, maintenance schedules, enforcement and emergency services. The provisions of the strategy will be consistent with the approved Ontario Provincial Parks Operating Standards, and will be reviewed annually and updated as required.

9.1 Visitor Services

Devil's Glen as a small provincial park, provides a limited variety of visitor services. Of the three visitor service components (information, interpretation, and recreation), the former two are emphasized at this park.

9.1.1. Information

Objectives of this component will include the following:

- informing visitors about the park, its services, facilities and management concerns;
- informing visitors about recreation and interpretive opportunities in the local area;
- informing visitors of the role of the Ministry of Natural Resources;
- instilling a sense of respect in visitors for the park environment;
- providing a means of feedback for visitors to communicate with park management.

The objectives outlined above will be achieved through all or some of the following: publications, signs and personal contact involving campsite visitation.

9.1.2 Interpretation

The park contains a variety of significant and interesting features (earth and life science) worthy of interpretation. The general major theme is the Niagara Escarpment with its distinctive natural features, its park system and the Bruce Trail.

Life Science

Features include a diverse range of vegetative communities some with rare and uncommon plant species. Included here is the significant trout spawning and habitat potential of the Mad River.

Earth Science

The main feature here is the regionally significant incised river valley cut through the escarpment by the Mad River.

Interpretation of the above will be essentially by self-use trails in conjunction with publications and on-site low-key facilities (i.e., plaques, signs, display boards).

Construction of a viewing platform is proposed. The platform will provide an excellent view over the Mod River valley, and will have a number of plaques with interpretive messages.

9.2 Recreation Management

- The park will be accessible on a year-round basis for day-use activities. Camping will only be available during the regular summer season.

- Passive recreation activities will be expanded (i.e., hiking, wildlife viewing, fishing). There will be no further expansion of camping or picnicking facilities because the upland landbase is already developed to capacity.

- Hunting will not be allowed in the park. Sport fishing will be encouraged in the Mad River.

- Because portions of the park's proposed hiking trails are sited on land owned by the Devil's Glen Country Club, a licence or easement agreement between the Ministry and the Club may be considered.

- Activities compatible with the park environment and park management guidelines, will be allowed as the district parks and recreation section deems suitable.

- Use of motorized off-road recreational vehicles will not be permitted.

9.3 Tourism Services

A firewood concession has been provided in the past, and could be re-established. It is unlikely that other concessions would be viable.

9.4 Marketing

A Marketing Plan, primarily aimed at attracting those types of people who would enjoy a quiet day use and/or camping experience with a limited range of recreational opportunities, will be prepared. The plan will emphasize the park's value as a base for exploring the Niagara Escarpment.

10. DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Two specific developments are recommended:

- Construction of a viewing platform with interpretive plaques.

- Expansion of the Mad River Hiking Trail westward to include the majority of accessible valleylands within the former Crown land area. This trail will have to be designed to avoid sensitive life/earth science features as well as to take advantage of the vistas offered along the rim of the valley.

- The park's water supply is from an artesian well. The quality of the water will be carefully monitored. If contamination problems develop, or appear likely, an alternate water supply will be provided.

11. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Public consultation during the management planning process focused on the local area and included the following:

- a news release and advertisement in the Collingwood Enterprise and Bulletin, Blue Mountain Buyers Guide and the Creemore Sun newspapers advised that the draft management plan and the background information document were available for review at the district office;

- copies of the management plan and news release were forwarded to local levels of government for review (Township of Nottawasaga, Simcoe County, Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority, Niagara Escarpment Commission);

- copies of the management plan and news release were sent to the following interest groups: Blue Mountain Club of the Bruce Trail Association, Devil's Glen Country Club, Federation of Ontario Naturalists and the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, Coalition on the Niagara Escarpment;

- where appropriate, contact was made with adjacent landowners by park management, to inform these landowners of the plan and its contents;

- announcements and posters were on display in the park during early 1986 advising park visitors of availability of plan, at the district office, for review.

12. PLAN REVIEW AND AMENDMENT

This management plan will be reviewed at least once every ten years to reconfirm or revise the resource management, operations and development policies. Minor amendments may be made in the interim as required. Major amendments having broad implications for park management will receive public review.

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